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13 March 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM:

  
Chief, Psychological Services Division  
Office of Medical Services

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SUBJECT: Formulation of a Comprehensive Testing  
PolicyREFERENCE: (a) Memo from DDCI to C/PSD on this Subject  
and other Topics, dated 14 November 1980  
  
(b) Memo from DDA to DDCI Requesting Extension  
of 16 January 1981 Deadline to 16 March  
1981, dated 23 December 1980

1. Reference (a) charges Chief, Psychological Services Division, and the Directors of Training and Education and Personnel Policy, Planning, and Management with the responsibility for formulating a comprehensive testing policy to be coordinated with the Headquarters Regulations. Formulation of a comprehensive testing policy is identified as part of the overall effort to implement the New Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures. In order to be able to offer testing policy recommendations consistent with current Agency test use, Chief, Psychological Services Division, has reviewed PSD files and records to determine the extent and pattern of use of psychological tests over the past two fiscal years. Reference (b) requested additional time to complete this task and extension of the deadline for submitting the testing policy recommendations from 16 January 1981 to 16 March 1981. The extension was approved by Mr. Carlucci on 30 December 1980.

2. Based on data provided by the Office of Personnel Policy, Planning, and Management, there are three principal ways in which professional vacancies in the Agency are filled: (a) by hiring outside applicants for Agency employment; (b) by upgrading clerical or technical employees and assigning them to professional positions; and (c) by reassigning professionals within a component or by acquiring professionals from other components. We believe that different testing policy recommendations are appropriate for each of these ways of filling Agency professional vacancies. Clerical applicants are not routinely tested by the Psychological Services Division. They

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are, however, given the Short Employment Test (SET) which is administered by the Office of Personnel Policy, Planning, and Management. Psychological Services Division research psychologists have analyzed the SET and found it to possess a high degree of content validity for Agency clerical job settings. We believe that the SET is a highly useful selection device and should continue to be administered to clerical applicants. We further believe that in stating the policy on the testing of clerical applicants, Headquarters Regulations should require that SET scores be used as one of the inputs to the selection of clerical applicants for Agency employment.

3. At the present time there is no stated policy on the testing of applicants for Agency professional positions. Managers faced with hiring decisions may, at their discretion, request psychological test data as an input to the selection process. We favor retention of this practice for professional selection. Use of psychological test data for professional selection, where considered desirable or necessary, has served the Agency well and has enabled test results to be used where they do the most good. Discretionary use of properly validated test results for professional selection does not violate the intent of the Uniform Guidelines. As long as all applicants for a particular professional position are evaluated by the same criteria, which may include use of properly validated test results, there is no requirement in the Guidelines that applicants for other, quite different professional positions be evaluated by the same criteria. We recommend that the current practice be retained and converted into stated policy in the Headquarters Regulations.

4. An alternative policy for the testing of professional applicants, which we consider less appropriate, is the following:

A. Evaluation of external applicants for Agency professional employment. The Psychological Services Division currently tests approximately 65% of all external applicants for Agency professional employment. Since some uncertainty always exists concerning the suitability of an external applicant tentatively identified as a viable candidate for an Agency professional assignment, we believe that all persons in this category should be tested, with the exception of those positions and entry grades specifically exempted by the Director of Personnel Policy, Planning, and Management. The testing of all external applicants for professional employment constitutes the uniform testing policy recommendation most consistent with the current level of professional applicant testing, which is estimated to be about 65% of all professional applicants.

B. Clerical and technical employees considered for upgrading to professional status. Psychological Services Division currently issues test reports on a substantial number of employees included in this category. We estimate that an average of one PSD test

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report is issued on each person upgraded to professional status. Since there is always risk involved in converting an employee from non-professional to professional status, psychological testing is needed to help determine suitability for the proposed assignment. Hence, we recommend for consideration as a uniform testing policy the requirement that all persons in this category be tested.

C. Professionals reassigned within a given component or acquired from other components. Psychological Services Division currently tests only a small percentage of individuals in this category, primarily those persons whose reassignment involves a significant increase in level of responsibility. Testing in these instances is appropriate. In the majority of cases in this category, which do not involve significant increases in level of responsibility, psychological testing adds little information that cannot be obtained from examination of the individual's prior job performance history. Hence, there is little need to test such individuals. As a result, we do not favor the establishment of a uniform requirement that all persons under consideration for professional reassignment be tested. We recommend instead that use of tests with this category of individual remain a managerial prerogative.

5. The testing policy recommendations presented here were drafted by Chief, Psychological Services Division, and have been fully coordinated with representatives from the Offices of Training and Education and Personnel Policy, Planning, and Management, as directed in Reference (a).

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